

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

July 21, 2003

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LAST WEEK

FY 2004 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS –On Monday, July 14, the House passed H. R. 2673, legislation making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year 2004. The vote was 347-64.

Earlier this week the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies (Chairman Bennett, UT) and Senate Appropriations Committee (Chairman, Stevens, AK) marked up S.1427, legislation for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year 2004.

A summary of reported funding for NRCS in the Senate bill is as follows:

Program	FY 2004 Mark
Conservation Operations.....	\$826,635,000
Snow Survey.....	\$. 9,500,000
Grazing Lands Conservation.....	\$ 23,500,000
Plant Materials.....	\$ 11,269,000
Watershed Surveys and Planning.....	\$ 10,000,000
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations.....	\$ 55,000,000*
Watershed Rehabilitation.....	\$ 29,805,000
RC&D.....	\$ 51,000,000
EQIP.....	\$1,000,000,000
GSWC.....	\$ 51,000,000
WRP.....	189,144 acres
WHIP.....	\$ 42,000,000
FRPP.....	\$ 112,044,000

*Caps Watershed Ops. Technical Assistance at \$20 million
Senate Floor Action is possible for the week of 7/21/03

Related Provisions of Note:

- Rejects Farm Bill technical Assistance Account and includes language prohibiting use of Conservation Operations and Watershed program funds for use in implementing Farm Bill Conservation Programs.
- Provides specific authority for certain watershed projects: Upper Tygart, WV; Kuhn Bayour, AR; Matanuska, AK; Dupage, IL; Dry Creek, UT; and Coal Creek, UT
- Zeroes out mandatory Watershed Rehab funding, in lieu of program being funded through discretionary account.
- Rejects Budget proposal to charge agencies for FECA benefits.
- Directs the USDA to carry out the recommendations of the National Drought Council.
- Requires USDA to seek Appropriations Committee approval before implementing a merger or reduction of any administrative or information technology functions.
- Directs USDA to develop guidance on procurement of bio-based products.
- Directs USDA to utilize authority under Partnerships and Cooperation to assist the Chesapeake Bay.
- Directs Agriculture Research Service to continue dam rehabilitation technology research.
- States that Technical Service Providers should be counted toward competitive sourcing goals.
- Directs \$6,000,000 in Conservation Operations funding to Source Water Protection
- Directs NRCS to develop NRI in Alaska
- States that across the board reductions in projects should apply to individual watershed sites.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

Bill	Sponsor	Purpose
S. 1398	DeWine, OH	To provide for the environmental restoration of the Great Lakes.
S. 1427	Bennett, UT	Making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004.
H. R. 2703	Gerlach, PA	To reserve a small percentage of the amounts made available to the Secretary of Agriculture for the Farm and Ranch lands Protection Program to fund challenge grants to encourage the purchase of conservation easements and other interests in land to be held by a State agency, county or eligible entity.

THIS WEEK**HEALTHY FOREST/CLEARING HAZARDOUS BRUSH FULL COMMITTEE**

HEARING - The Senate Energy and National Resources Committee (Chairman Domenici, NM) will hold a hearing on pending legislation, S. 1314, a bill to expedite procedures for hazardous fuels reduction activities on National Forest System Lands and H.R. 1904, a bill to improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System land and Bureau of Land Management lands.

July 22

10:00 a.m.

366 Dirksen Building

WATER RESOURCES FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Chairman Young, AK) will mark up pending legislation concerning water resources.

July 23

TBA

2167 Rayburn Building

LOOKING AHEAD

CROP INSURANCE AND COMMODITY PROGRAMS FIELD HEARING - The General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee (Chairman Moran, KS) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing on crop insurance and commodity programs.

August 19

8:30 a.m.

Ada, MN

WESTERN WATER ISSUES OVERSIGHT HEARING – The Senate energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Domenici, NM) will hold an oversight hearing on the Interior Department programs that address western water issues. This hearing was originally scheduled for May 6.

Date TBA

Time TBA

366 Dirksen Building
